



ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON  
MEDICAL SCHOOL

University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey

The Cancer  
Institute of  
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**Scientist Receives Nearly \$770,000 to Investigate a New Therapeutic Path Against Melanoma**  
*Researcher at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Receives American Cancer Society Grant*

**New Brunswick, N.J., December 22, 2008** – With 2,300 New Jersey residents diagnosed with melanoma this year, the Garden State ranks sixth in the nation in new cases of the disease, according to the American Cancer Society. It is that statistic on which a scientist at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) hopes to have impact, thanks to a \$768,000 grant awarded by the American Cancer Society to study melanoma development. CINJ is a Center of Excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

The American Cancer Society Research Scholar Grant will support the work of Karine Cohen-Solal, PhD, a researcher at CINJ and an assistant professor of medicine at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, in the area of malignant melanoma. According to the American Cancer Society, while melanoma accounts for less than five percent of all dermatologic cancers, it is responsible for most skin cancer deaths.

A protein in the body known as TGF beta assures key biological functions that contribute to the prevention of melanoma development. However, at a particular stage of development, melanoma cells have become insensitive to this protein. Dr. Cohen-Solal's team aims to find out by which mechanisms.

During the course of the four-year grant period, the team will analyze other proteins crucial for the control of TGF beta activity and will measure the impact of certain drugs on these proteins with one major goal of interrupting melanoma cell division and/or eliminating melanoma cells. Cohen-Solal believes the information gained from the study could have other major implications including the identification of a new prognostic marker for the disease through the routine testing of surgically removed melanoma samples.

Cohen-Solal notes she is greatly appreciative of such support, "The American Cancer Society understands the tremendous need to support the building blocks of cancer research. Awards such as this allow for scientists to explore some of the most basic, yet critical, facets of cancer. By having a full understanding of the mechanisms initiating, maintaining, and aggravating tumor development, we have an opportunity to identify new prevention methods and to develop new and improved treatment options."

"We are pleased to count Dr. Cohen-Solal as an American Cancer Society research grant recipient," said Frank Mascia, executive vice president of the American Cancer Society, New Jersey. "The American Cancer Society's Research and Training Program has invested over \$3.3 billion in cancer research, much of it focusing on the work of promising new investigators, since its inception in 1946. During this time, we have funded 42 researchers, primarily early in their careers, who have gone on to receive the Nobel Prize. We fully expect that the ideas and innovations arising from this new grant will continue that legacy."

The award period begins January 1.

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### **About The Cancer Institute of New Jersey**

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is the state's first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, and is dedicated to improving the prevention, detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer. CINJ's physician-scientists engage in translational research, transforming their laboratory discoveries into clinical practice quite literally bringing research to life. The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is a center of excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. To support CINJ, please call the Cancer Institute of New Jersey Foundation at 1-888-333-CINJ.

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Network is comprised of hospitals throughout the state and provides a mechanism to rapidly disseminate important discoveries into the community. Partner Hospital: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. Affiliate Hospitals: Bayshore Community Hospital, CentraState Healthcare System, Cooper University Hospital\*, Jersey Shore University Medical Center, JFK Medical Center, Morristown Memorial Hospital, Overlook Hospital, Raritan Bay Medical Center, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton (CINJ-Hamilton), Saint Peter's University Hospital, Somerset Medical Center, Southern Ocean County Hospital, The University Hospital/UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School\*, and University Medical Center at Princeton. \*Academic Affiliate

### **About the American Cancer Society**

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across the United States. For more information anytime, call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

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